COSTUME DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
FOR TROJAN WOMEN 2.0, BY CHARLES MEE

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Master of Fine Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By Lindsay Amber Simon, B.A.

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The Ohio State University
2008

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to document the costume design and production process for *Trojan Women 2.0* for The Ohio State University Department of Theatre’s 2007-2008 season. Written by Charles Mee and co-directed by Maureen Ryan and Jeanine Thompson, the production ran November 1st through November 17th 2007 at The Ohio State University in the Roy Bowen Theatre.

*Trojan Women 2.0* is a collage piece based on Euripides' Greek 415 B.C. *The Trojan Women*, as well as Hector Berlioz' 1863 French opera *Les Troyens*. Mee’s adaptation, however, imagines Troy as a modern metropolis left burning and destroyed in the wake of the Trojan War. He weaves together many iconic images, stories and music from throughout history. The design concept and research have been similarly collaged; taken from a range of areas including ancient Greece, contemporary political hotbed regions (Darfur, Iraq), modern pop-culture icons, and haute couture fashion designers.
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I am grateful to Crystal Herman, Elisa O’Neal and Marysha Sarris for their tireless work building costume pieces for the production.

I would also like to thank my family and my fellow graduate students at The Ohio State University for all their help, support and understanding.
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2005 ............................... Hidden Voices
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       Costume Designer – OSU

2006 ............................... Our Town
       Directed by Jimmy Bohr
       Costume Designer – OSU

2007 ............................... Trojan Women 2.0
       Directed by Maureen Ryan and Jeanine Thompson
       Costume Designer - OSU

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Theatre
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgments ................................................................................................. iii

Vita ........................................................................................................................ iv

List of Tables ......................................................................................................... vii

List of Figures ....................................................................................................... viii

List of Plates ......................................................................................................... ix

Chapters:

1. The Producing Situation .................................................................................... 1

2. The Production Concept and Design Scheme .................................................. 4

3. Character Analysis .......................................................................................... 19

4. The Process ...................................................................................................... 37

5. An Evaluation of the Process ........................................................................... 55

Bibliography ........................................................................................................ 60

Appendices:

Appendix A: Directors’ Concept .......................................................................... 62

Appendix B: *Columbus Dispatch* Review .......................................................... 70

Appendix C: Tables ............................................................................................... 74

Appendix D: Figures ............................................................................................. 79
Appendix E: Plates ................................................................. 88
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Costume Plet</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Budget Chart</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Research images for Helen’s makeup, Dido’s dress</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research images for Hecuba’s costume, Act II color palette</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fatagaga research images</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Sketches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Andromache sketch #1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Andromache sketch #2</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cassandra sketch</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Polyxena sketch</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hecuba sketch</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF PLATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Plate for Hecuba</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plate for Andromache</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plate for Cassandra</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Plate for Helen</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Plate for Polyxena</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Plate for Talthybius</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Plate for Aeneas #1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Plate for Act I Chorus</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Plate for Menelaus</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Plate for Bill and RayBob</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Plate for Dido</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Plate for Aeneas #2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Plate for Act II Soldiers</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Plate for Act II Soldiers #2</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Plate for Act II Chorus #1</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Plate for Act II Chorus #2</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Production photos 1</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Production photos 2 ................................................................. 106
19. Production photos 3 ................................................................. 107
20. Production photos 4 ................................................................. 108
21. Production photos 5 ................................................................. 109
22. Production photos 6 ................................................................. 110
23. Production photos 7 ................................................................. 111
24. Production photos 8 ................................................................. 112
CHAPTER 1

THE PRODUCING SITUATION

_Trojan Woman 2.0_ was performed at The Ohio State University November 1st through November 17th, 2007 at the Roy Bowen Theatre. The theatre is located on the second floor of the Drake Performance and Event Center. _Trojan Women 2.0_ was performed as the second play in a seven-production season. The Bowen Theatre is a modified ¾ thrust stage with stadium seating that holds 250 persons.

The costumes for _Trojan Women 2.0_ were constructed in The Ohio State University Theatre Department’s Costume Studio. The Costume Studio is located on the ground floor of the Drake Performance and Event Center. From the Costume Studio access is readily available to both the Bowen and Thurber theatre spaces, as well as the green room area and four dressing rooms. The studio is equipped with four 45”x75” cutting tables, seven domestic sewing machines, three industrial sewing machines and three sergers. There are three gravity-feed industrial irons, a dye vat, two washing machines, and two dryers. Dress forms in a complete range of both male and female sizes are available, as well as all the accompanying tools and notions necessary for costume construction and alteration. The green room, located just outside the Costume Studio, is lined with storage cabinets that contain millinery, craft, make-up, shoe, wig and dye supplies. Next to the green room four dressing rooms are located, which are available for fittings as well as standard performance use. Two of the dressing

1
rooms accommodate eight persons and two accommodate fifteen persons. An extensive costume stock is stored in four locations. Three are located in the Drake Performance and Event Center and one is located in an off-site storage facility on Kenny Road.

Assistant Professor Kristine Kearney, Resident Costume Designer, and Jan Woods, Costume Studio Supervisor, oversee the construction of all costumes produced for The Ohio State University Department of Theatre. Kearney acts as advisor for the student costume designers and oversees the design process of each student. Woods facilitates the construction process within the Costume Studio. Woods communicates with stage managers, distributes work in the studio and stays in contact with the costume designer regarding costume construction processes, pattern development and fittings. She also meets with the costume designer at the beginning of the build process to project budgetary needs and assist in determining the intricacies and needs of each specific costume piece.

The production period allowed for Trojan Women 2.0 was approximately eight weeks. During this time costume construction was also taking place for three one-act plays. There are two other costume graduate assistants besides myself that work in the shop and are responsible for the more complex build projects as well as the day to day running of the shop. The Costume Studio also typically employs one to two work study students with a more advanced sewing background who assist with complex garment construction and alteration. The Studio also relies heavily on undergraduate theatre
students who are required to work in the studio for course credit. These students come from a range of backgrounds and their degree of skill in costume construction varies widely. There are approximately ten to fifteen undergraduate students in the Studio each academic quarter. Additionally, Elli Loomis, a scenic design graduate student with an interest in costume design, was assigned as my assistant costume designer.

The budget for costume materials was $3,000. This money went towards purchasing fabric for the gowns, much of the contemporary clothing, jewelry, shoes, specialty make-up, and accessories and all other costume-specific needs for Trojan Women 2.0.

The production was co-directed by Maureen Ryan and Jeannine Thompson, both members of the acting/directing faculty at The Ohio State University. The design team included scenic designer and MFA candidate Matthew McCarren, lighting designer and MFA candidate Anthony Pellecchia and music director David Toro. Chris Zinkon served as the technical director. The cast was in place on September 24, 2007 and consisted of 20 students, both graduate and undergraduate. The target audience for the play was comprised largely of undergraduate introductory theatre students, other university students and a range of people from the Columbus area community.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRODUCTION CONCEPT AND DESIGN SCHEME

_Trojan Women 2.0_ was written by Charles Mee as an adaptation of both Euripides’ _The Trojan Women_ and of Hector Berlioz’ 1863 French opera _Les Troyens_. Mee’s contemporary version has the city of Troy imagined as a thriving modern metropolis, still burning in the wake of the Trojan War. One of the most significant features of this play is its collage nature. Rather than a simple retelling of _The Trojan Women_, Mee collects stories, anecdotes, music and imagery from a vast array of human experiences throughout history and combines them in a way that not only tells the classical tale, but does so in a way that today’s audience can more readily relate to. _Trojan Women 2.0_ draws on stories from the survivors of the Holocaust and of Hiroshima, pop songs from the last fifty years and from talk shows and news broadcasts. By pulling in selective bits and pieces of pop culture, Mee facilitates the telling of an ancient story by drawing on relevant parallels with which we, as a modern audience, can associate. A war in Ancient Greece, for example, holds little meaning for many of us, though we can more easily relate to modern events such as the Holocaust and acknowledge the feelings those events elicit within us. Mee then uses those feelings to transport and connect his audience to the world he has created. Mee cites the Fatagaga pieces of Max Ernst as his compositional inspiration in that much of the text has been
taken from and/or inspired by other texts (Mee "About the Project"). Ernst was a German dada artist who created the collaged pieces representing the "Manufacture of Guaranteed Gasometric Pictures" post World War I. The images depict a surreal and eerie blend of organic (human and animal) and mechanical elements; familiar things made strange (Appendix D-3). Mee says, "What Ernst did in effect, is what I'm saying I'd like to do: he took scissors and cut text out of daily newspapers and catalogues of other things, and then he rearranged them on the page and glued them down and did a little drawing and painting around them to make them into his view of something. So, in effect, he took the unedited material of the real world and rendered it as hallucination," (Appendix A).

In as much as we influence the world we inhabit, that world influences us. It is impossible for humans to live in the world and not have a hand in shaping the future. The simple act of being forever impacts what is to come. This ultimately creates our collective history. That history is what Mee draws on as a raw source. This is how we impact the world. The way the world impacts us is the way in which Mee filters and then reissues such information. His process of re-presenting the world to us is a Post-Modern combination of what has happened and how society has perceived and processed it.

Thompson and Ryan's directors' concept, then, was to take this story that Mee has melded together from all sorts of human triumphs and tragedies and present an assemblage of fragments of our world; fragments that collage together and ultimately
illustrate the horror as well as the possibility of being human. We live in a time where our country is currently at war, and yet that sort of horror is so foreign and inconceivable to us. This production sought to bring that experience into a world that resembles our own, a world represented by a collection of iconic images that are part of our historical landscape.

Mee says, “I like plays that are not too neat, too finished, too presentable. My plays are broken, jagged, filled with sharp edges, filled with things that take sudden turns, careen into each other, smash up, veer off in sickening turns. That feels good to me. It feels like my life. It feels like the world. And then I like to put this – with some sense of struggle remaining – into a classical form, a Greek form, or a beautiful dance theatre piece, or some other effort at civilization,” (Mee “Charles Mee”).

Euripides, one of the great tragedians of Classical Athens, wrote The Trojan Women in 415 BCE. This was his third play in a trilogy dealing with the Trojan War, preceded by Alexandros, about the Trojan Prince Paris, and Palamedes, about the Greek mistreatment of Palamedes. The trilogy was presented at that year's Dionysia, a religious festival in honor of Dionysus, the god of theatre. The play was inspired by two events that year, the Athenian capture of the island of Melos and the enslavement of its people and the Athenian expedition to Sicily. Euripides’ play won second prize at the Dionysia (Lahana “The Trojan Women”). In the play, Euripides focuses on five women: Hecuba, Queen of Troy; Andromache, Hecuba's daughter-in-law; Cassandra, Hecuba's daughter;
Polyxena, Hecuba's youngest child; and Helen, the woman whose infidelity is said to have prompted the entire Trojan War. Much of the story and the characters come from the final chapter of The Iliad, Homer's epic poem written in the 8th or 7th century BCE.

Several thousand years later, in 1996, Charles Mee wrote Trojan Woman A Love Story, first produced in New York by En Garde Arts and directed by Tina Landau. In 2001 the script evolved into Trojan Women 2.0 as part of the "Imperial Dreams Tetralogy". Iphigenia 2.0, Agamemnon 2.0 and Orestes 2.0 round out the collection; all of which are adaptations based on Classical Greek texts. Mee is forthcoming about his approach to creating the text, acknowledging Euripides' contribution but stating also that this is not merely an adaptation of the Greek playwright's work. Mee says: "Sometimes playwrights steal stories and conversations and dreams and intimate revelations from their friends and lovers and call this original. And sometimes some of us write about our own innermost lives, believing that, then, we have written something truly original and unique. But, of course, the culture writes us first, and then we write our stories," (Mee "About the Project"). That is the spirit with which Mee approaches this play.

Euripides' play is a point of departure for Trojan Women 2.0. But as much as it is a story about the women of the Trojan War, its themes and ideas are universally current. Love, hate, revenge, passion, war, death, lust and wealth are timeless issues. Thompson and Ryan sought to "connect the issues of the mythological realm to our contemporary world," and "embrace anachronism." In a much larger sense, this is a play about
possibility and about love. Trojan Women 2.0 is about the best and worst of being human: the rage, jealousy, hate, envy, suffering, distrust and pain, but also the joy, respect, generosity, forgiveness and love. All this and more goes on stage; every possibility, along with that of change. Ryan asks, “Can we love more than we hate?” (Appendix A).

In developing a design concept for this production I began with Act I, exploring both Mee’s and Euripides’ texts. Vital to my process was a need to understand the source from which Mee was drawing inspiration, and to that extent, the source from which Euripides was drawing the same. I made the decision to explore the storyline from its inception in Ancient Greece and trace the tale up to Mee’s adaptation. Homer’s The Iliad, Euripides’ The Trojan Women and Mee’s Trojan Women 2.0 were all explored. I felt it necessary to approach Act II both on its own and in relation to Act I. Euripides makes no mention of Dido and Aeneas, characters that dominate Act II. Dido and Aeneas historically first appear in Virgil’s Aeneid, written in the first century BCE. Hector Berlioz then wrote his opera, Les Troyens, in 1856, which was based on the second and forth books of the Aeneid, featuring Dido and Aeneas. This opera serves as inspiration for Mee’s interpretation of the two lovers in Act II of Trojan Women 2.9. By introducing the story of Dido and Aeneas in the context of an opera, Mee creates an inherent sense of drama and dynamism in the action.
Act II exists as a counterpoint to Act I. The desolation and tragedy of the first act are balanced by the hopefulness of the second act. There is a juxtaposition of death and birth or rebirth. The two acts combine to bring the lifecycle full circle. Much like the phoenix rises from its ashes, a new world, full of infinite possibilities, is enabled by the wreckage of the old world. There is a distinct shift in the play at this point from the Trojan women to Dido and Aeneas. Aeneas represents possibility or hope. When he unexpectedly falls in love with Dido in the midst of his journey he is torn between duty and love, past and future, old and new. He feels bound by his promise to Hecuba to build a new civilization; one which has a chance of defeating Greece. Ultimately this is a civilization that will be born out of revenge. What Dido offers is forgiveness and she cannot understand why Aeneas does not accept it. She says, “But you love me, don’t you? ... And now you are saying you need to leave and that the reason is that you need to live in a world without hope. Are you listening to yourself?” (Mee “Trojan Women 2.0”). There has been no growth on Aeneas’ part and Dido seeks to save him from himself and his perpetuation of a cycle of hate.

In the final scene Dido attempts to drown Aeneas, not out of hate, but out of love. She wants to kill his vengeful spirit. As Ryan states in the directors’ concept, “Dido’s love turns into an act of violence to salvage love. As Mee suggests, being human is indeed complex. In fact, it’s exhausting, which is the final image Mee leaves us with at the end of the play. Dido and Aeneas are prostrate on the floor faced in opposite
directions. Nothing has been resolved, but we have at least exhausted the possibilities,” (Appendix A).

The design team had its first production meeting with the directors and we were presented with the directors’ concept. This also provided a more comprehensive idea of how all the design elements were to be incorporated, artistically as well as technically. One of the initial concerns for the production team was the pool of water that was to be featured on stage. The script called for the pool in Act II, but the decision was made by the scenic designer to have it present and incorporated into both Act I and Act II. The presence of the water posed many issues from several standpoints, but in regard to costume choices it would play a large role in fabric and foot wear selections.

Following this initial meeting with the directors and the other designers, I was able to begin developing some concrete costume design ideas for the show. Act I and Act II are very different, almost opposite, in tone and required completely different looks. Act I is a dark, war torn, burning world that is permeated by a sense of urgency, of chaos and of death. Act II is a revitalization; the rebuilding of a new world that is full of hope and promise. The time period for the clothing was contemporary, yet the script, so rich in history and myth, calls for costumes of a grand scale that are larger than life. The directors, Ryan and Thompson, had challenged the designers to “think big” in all aspects of this production. The characters in this play have expansive personalities; they are legends and their stories have endured for centuries. The challenge was to translate these
iconic figures into a modern context and imagine how someone like Helen of Troy would appear today, given the heightened drama of Mee's world.

Incorporating elements of Ancient Greek fashion into the costumes was important as a way of bridging the gap between Euripides and Mee and to pay an homage of sorts to the myths. Grecian silhouettes continue to be timeless as far as high fashion is concerned and blend beautifully with haute couture styles. In order to effectively convey the social status, refinement and urbanity of the women of the royal family I began with contemporary haute couture fashion designs. Fashion industry magazines like *Vogue*, *InStyle* and *W* were where I began my research.

Mee, in his script, identifies the designer clothing each of the women should wear, giving me some insight into his visual perceptions of each of their characters. I included these designers in my research, but in many cases felt it necessary to explore options beyond those offered by Mee. I felt that the women represented America at its most prosperous. They are living examples of what this country can offer and so I turned to fashion designers who have made their mark designing the "American Dream."

Ralph Lauren, in particular, has created an empire around an ideal world of sporting aristocrats who sail, play polo and hold lavish dinner parties. Many of his classic, iconic pieces and silhouettes influenced my designs. Also of importance is Mee's Americanization of his script. The women of Troy's royal family are portrayed as wealthy, high society Americans, and the spa setting of Act II can be viewed as a direct
corollary of the society that produced those women. Andromache herself makes lengthy mention of the countless hours she has spent in the gym with an athletic trainer in her personal quest for perfection; it is a perfection she feels obligated to, based on her position as a glamorous woman in the public eye. While the spa/gym has its roots in the ancient communal baths, today the gym represents an American obsession with perfection based on women’s fashion magazines and their portrayal of what is considered “beauty.” While “going to the gym” is not exclusively an American venture, it has taken on a cult status in the U.S.

The Greek and Trojan soldiers are given a certain familiarity which is echoed in their costumes. Thompson and Ryan were adamant that the soldiers not blatantly appear as American (U.S. insignia, American flags, etc.) but their clothing was taken from the U.S. Army, which may be viewed as an especially loaded gesture in light of the current war. In many ways, our society and its grotesque interactions with the world at large is illustrated through the relationship between the upper class women of Troy, the enslaved chorus women and the Greek army in Act I. It is impossible for an audience not to draw parallels between the aftermath of war they are seeing onstage and the current war they are seeing on the news.

Mee specifies in his script that the chorus women appear as “dark skinned, third world.” The directors took this opportunity to shed light on various political hotbed regions. Initial research areas included Darfur, Tibet, Iraq and Afghanistan. Through our
meetings, the directors and I decided to avoid any specific regional look for the women but to instead use an array of garments from around the world and collage the entire look of the chorus as well. Inspiration for this look came from the women of Africa, who would frequently layer their traditional garments with distinctly American pop culture clothing. The presence of American brand name logos scattered among the inhabitants of third world countries also speaks volumes about the pervasiveness of American society around the world.

In designing this production it became important to consider the levels of translation and perception at work. Visually, there are several layers of interpretation to be aware of when designing a play of a collaged nature. Mee begins with Euripides’ and Berlioz’ texts, pulling out what he considers to be important themes or aspects and then imposes his perceptions of popular culture to create Trojan Women 2.0. Further interpretation occurs at the directorial level, as Ryan and Thompson draw out facets of Mee’s text which speaks to them and what their objectives were in presenting this piece. My work is then informed by the directors’ perception of Mee, as well as my own impressions of his work. Finally the audience must process all of the above information within the framework of their own experiences, creating a multi-dimensional encounter with the work.

Due to the fact that this play is heavily collaged, the significance of complete accordance between designers cannot be underestimated. Lighting, scenic and costume
elements needed to blend harmoniously, not simply because it was important for everything to "match" but because all designers were drawing inspiration from and researching such an extensive range of sources. That extreme breadth of research served to make the show a richer and more culturally comprehensive experience, provided all the parts work together as a whole. The beauty in this type of design is the jaggedness and brokenness of which Mee speaks; perhaps a truer representation of the world than a typical theatrical design. Everything should not match. Things can be messy and lacking in "wholeness." In order to be successful, however, there need to be common elements that tie the production together as a whole. The process of collaging together a costume design and then coordinating that with a collaged scenic design, sound-scape and lighting design and have it all blend together successfully was challenging.

After I had collected initial input from the directors, read the script and other research materials and gathered my initial reactions in response, I began researching various images and generating preliminary renderings. I began designing Act 1 first. The two acts, in some respects, needed to be treated as two completely different elements. Visually they were so dissimilar that it was necessary for me to begin designing the acts mutually exclusively of one another. I started with the principle female characters of Act 1: Hecuba, Helen, Andromache, Polyxena and Cassandra. I felt that Act 1 revolved around them and their designs would influence those of the other characters. These five women drive the play so their costumes took precedent. They are the strongest forces in
the play and my initial reactions to them were more extreme than the other characters in Act I. Those were the designs I began with and proceeded to fill in the other designs around them.

I knew Hecuba, as family matriarch and queen, needed a very strong, regal silhouette. Andromache struck me as very vulnerable and delicate, based on her difficulty she was experiencing coping with the war. I knew I wanted to incorporate at least one clearly Grecian gown into the design and Andromache’s traits seemed to echo the elegant nature of Grecian dress. The light, flowing, draped silhouette captured her fragility perfectly. Helen’s portrayal in Mee’s script required a sexy, lingerie-inspired look. Cassandra is a very strong-willed woman who would require a gown as equally fierce as she is. Polyxena is a very young girl, but wise beyond her years and her dichotomy of woman and child was something I wanted to highlight.

It soon became apparent that many of the characters fell into specific groups, i.e. the royal family, military soldiers, chorus women, spa women. These groups typically occupy the stage at the same time and costumes needed to be planned accordingly, with attention paid to color, texture and silhouette. Additionally, the designs needed to unify each group as a whole, while still defining each individual with separate character traits.

For Act II I knew I wanted to limit the color palette drastically and change the silhouette for the chorus women. The silhouette of the women would move from ragged, slovenly and layered to sleek and beautiful. Modern workout clothing was proposed by
the directors in the concept statement. I found this choice to be very appropriate but
waned to limit the style and fabric choices in order to give the group of women a
thoroughly cohesive look. I prepared some color palette choices to discuss with
Thompson and Ryan. Initially I was drawn to an entirely white palette for Act II. In
order to make the leap from Act I to II in as bold and dramatic a way as the directors
desired, such an extreme and limited palette seemed appropriate and visually stunning.
However, I was also inspired by water and the pool-side feel of Act II and felt that
incorporating a few bold colors was also an option, should the directors have felt the
white to be too strong a statement. Vibrant colors would provide the desired contrast
from Act I. White could still serve as a base color, but a combination with the aqua blue
and red-orange I discovered in some of my research was a strong second option I was
entertaining. These colors had an aquatic, tropical quality I was interested in
incorporating (Appendix D-2).

After preliminary pencil sketches were completed for the principle characters and
examples of the soldiers and chorus women, I met with the directors to present my
renderings and address design specifics. The various ideas stated above were discussed
for each of the groups of characters, as well as individual character designs. During this
meeting the directors and I decided that the designs for Aeneas, Cassandra and Helen
needed to be adjusted, as well as some elements of the chorus women. In order to
address the changes that needed to be made to some of the characters’ costumes, further
research into each of their mythological backgrounds was necessary. The directors’ initial concerns were in the translation between ancient and modern perceptions of the characters. Thompson and Ryan felt that a strong visual representation needed to exist between the characters as they existed in mythology and my modern updated version.

Color schemes were decided upon; the color palette for Act I was appropriately subdued and dark, in keeping with the serious tone. All specific color choices were carefully selected based on individual characters and their traits, circumstances and personalities. Burgundies and blood reds, silver, black and white, navy and dark green comprised the fabric color choices for the majority of the principle characters. The ethnic look required for the chorus allowed for a little more flexibility in color and pattern selection but the dark palette was still applied.

The directors were agreeable to an entirely white palette in Act II. This white was used to represent the serenity, peace, purity and refinement of the world that Aeneas and his soldiers stumble upon in Carthage. The women in white at the Carthage spa are from a world completely different than the war-torn Troy from which the soldiers are fleeing. As the men enter in their filthy fatigues they are out of place in the clean, pristine world.

The preliminary costume designs for Trojan Women 2.0 were presented to the entire design team at a production meeting on August 30, 2007. At this meeting the final set design was also presented, giving me a more complete sense of what the challenges would be in terms of the water. Concern was expressed by several production members
about the water element on set and that the Costume Studio and I needed to be sensitive
to that situation. The materials for the set would be primarily expanded steel and metal.
A pool of water, multiple platforms, ladders, steep ramps and an assortment of scraps and
debris scattered on stage were all concerns for the actors and their costumes. Open
communication between the scenic designer and me was essential in regards to potential
hazards and we continued to discuss changes throughout our process.
CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

_Trojan Women_ is a play full of very rich, strong, historical characters that appear in literary classics such as the _Iliad_. Large amounts of historical research were done on each character in order to blend the mythological representations with this modern adaptation. The costume design choices were driven by character more than any other element and I endeavored to make each of these historical figures stand on their own as the iconic individuals that they are. Additionally, care was taken to define each group of characters as they appeared onstage and then further specify character within those groups. For example, the chorus women, as a whole, are dressed in a variety of prints and patterns, as influenced by my research of third world countries. This is in stark contrast to the royal family, all of whom were dressed in solids. In this instance there is a balance between the ceremonial and the common, the urbane and impoverished.

All the women of the royal family are to be dressed in designer gowns representative of their status in the modern world. In the words of Sondheim, they appear as “ladies who lunch”: women who have very few cares in the world, women who are at the top of the social ladder. They are privileged and it should be quite clear that never would they have expected to be in the slave-like position they now find themselves. These women represent everything good that America (or any country) can be and
everything that the world has to offer. This is in stark contrast to the women of the chorus: subservient women who have spent their lives at the bottom of the social ladder. They represent the dark side of suppression; a world of poverty, racism and indifference. The script describes these women as “dark skinned…third-world” in an effort to illustrate class struggle around the world, but also to describe how precarious our own comfortable position as citizens of this country is, particularly at a time when we are currently involved in a war. One is never stable in their social position, be it city-wide or world-wide, and war can have a devastating impact on everyone involved. War spares no one.

Hecuba is the matriarch of the royal family of Troy. She is the queen and she retains her dignity and regality throughout her ordeal. She has endured the death of her husband and her sons, seen people of her city raped and murdered and watched Troy burn. She is left only with her daughters Polyxena and Cassandra and her daughter-in-law Andromache. She begins as a compassionate woman, adamant that violence cannot be combated with more violence and that war will not resolve anything. After Polyxena is taken from her and sacrificed at Achilles’ grave, Hecuba begins a downward spiral. Hope is gone. Revenge has filled her heart. Nothing can console her after the senseless death of her child. Though Hecuba is living in a nightmare she is still a queen and a mother and she seeks to maintain some sense of order for the sake of everyone around her. Her children and the women of Troy look up to her and expect some sense of leadership from her. She is still a powerful woman and should appear as such.
My inspiration for Hecuba’s look came from fashion designer Carolina Herrera, who is known for her stylish, classic designs and graceful maturity. She is frequently pictured in full ball gown skirts paired with crisp masculine-styled shirts (Appendix D-2). Her look is regal while still being practical, luxe yet no-nonsense. Dressing Hecuba in a ball gown skirt creates a silhouette that makes her appear larger, more imposing and royal—a formidable opponent. I chose a black silk dupioni for her skirt for the fabric’s richness as well as its ability to hold the shape I desired. The fabric is light, airy and easy to move in, enabling the actor to negotiate the complex set. Additionally, should the actor’s blocking require her to enter the pool of water, the nature of the textile will keep any water absorption to a minimum. Hecuba also wears a white, men’s styled dress shirt. White is a significant color choice for a number of reasons. Firstly, white is a color that is difficult to keep clean and has historically been limited to people whose lives are comfortable enough to accommodate it, Hecuba being no exception. Seeing her white shirt soiled and bloody speaks volumes about what has happened to her during the past days and weeks but also clearly states her social position prior to the war.

The use of white in Act I is tightly controlled and the only other place in which it appears is on Talthybius, a Greek diplomat whom Hecuba is in direct confrontation with throughout the act. His shirt is also a white dress shirt, although in his case it is clean and fresh, highlighting the power struggle between them. Her shirt features a collar that stands up, framing her face and giving her a distinctly noble, elegant air.
Hecuba’s sleeves are worn rolled up in order to literally give the sense that she is a “roll up your sleeves” type of person who is determined not to give in or be defeated. This style choice also gives her a bit of a sporty look and since the shirt is made of simple cotton it contrasts nicely with her elegant skirt to give her an All-American look. Conversations with Ryan and Thompson have resulted in her costume being black and white as a visual representation of her internal struggle in addition to her character arc from compassionate understanding to vengeful desperation. Her hair is swept up off her neck in an up do that has been wrecked and she wears only one chandelier earring. Her necklace is a metal choker piece that adds an ancient feel to her otherwise modern look.

Andromache is the wife of Hector, Hecuba’s son. She is young, beautiful and royal. She carries with her a doll representing her infant son. Clearly she is having a difficult time coping with everything that has occurred and progresses steadily into an evermore crazed and delusional state. She is remote, in shock and completely disconnected from the real world. Prior to the war she led a very socially privileged life. Her life was strictly regimented and health conscious, giving the outward appearance of peace and fulfillment. Hers is the most distinctly Greek of all the costumes, a flowing draped gown with a single shoulder strap.

The under layer of the gown is made of polyester satin and the outer layer is a chiffon in the same blood red color, which is artfully draped around the body, gathering at the bust. These particular fabrics were chosen because it was clear early in the
rehearsal process that Andromache would be spending a good deal of Act I in the pool and these synthetic fabrics would absorb a minimum amount of water. The fabrics are also very light, ensuring the actor’s comfort once they did become drenched.

A gold strap runs from center front over the left shoulder to center back, giving the dress an asymmetrical, draped, Grecian look. The bodice of the under dress is fitted to allow for a more modern look and the underskirt overlaps in the front high on the leg to give Andromache a young, sexy feel. She also wears her hair in a messy up do, along with a thick bronze bangle bracelet. The color of her gown is a deep blood red, which is strong enough to stand up to the other bold colors of the act and somber enough to suit the mood. In addition, obvious color associations to blood are evoked as well as danger in general while still appearing very regal. Also, because this production was movement-heavy, special consideration was given to selecting fabrics and shoes that would encumber the actors as little as possible.

Cassandra is Hecuba’s daughter and, according to myth, was blessed by Apollo with the ability to see the future. Once Apollo realized Cassandra did not return his affections for her, he turned her gift into a curse by ensuring that no one would ever believe Cassandra’s predictions, thinking of her merely as a madwoman or doomsday prophetess. Cassandra foresaw the destruction of Troy and was unable to do anything about it, causing her a great amount of pain and anguish. She is typically historically
depicted scantily clad with long hair whipping wildly around her body; she is stunningly beautiful yet her madness repels men.

Inspiration for Cassandra was difficult but finally I researched women in this day and age who are well off and in the public eye, but whose talents are undermined because of their emotional instability or volatility. I decided upon Courtney Love, a woman who is undeniably talented but also considered one of the most bizarre and troubled women in pop culture today. There is a harshness, a raggedness and an edginess to her that is quite similar to the Cassandra portrayed in Mee’s text.

Cassandra is a spitfire who, at this point in the war, has absolutely no regard for what anyone has to say to her. Exploration into Courtney Love’s red carpet fashion choices yielded a perfect dress for Cassandra. The dress was almost a direct copy of the gown Love wore to the Golden Globe Awards in 2000. The dress was, however, altered slightly to look more Grecian; it was given braided asymmetrical straps and side ruching. The gown clings to her frame and is body-conscious down to the hips, at which point it flares out and trains asymmetrically behind her. There is a slit up to her thigh, accentuating her figure and giving her a slinky animal quality. The gown is made of silk charmeuse that gives it a beautiful flowing quality. The fabric, originally white, was dyed to a gunmetal gray color, lending a steely fortitude to the character. Cassandra’s hair was very long and the actor dyed her own long hair a very dark brown color to match all her dark accent pieces and makeup, giving her a sinister, edgy look. Her kohl eye
makeup was applied liberally, her nails were painted black and she wore a black stone necklace that would reference prayer beads that Cassandra, the priestess, would have worn. This was another costume which needed to allow the actor a range of extreme movements. The silk charmeuse was light enough to allow her to move easily and the cut of the dress allowed her to move with ease.

Helen, who came to be known as Helen of Troy, is married to Menelaus, King of Ancient Sparta and brother to Agamemnon. Agamemnon was commander in chief of the Greeks during the Trojan War. Helen was brought to Troy by Paris, Hecuba’s son. Historical accounts of her tale vary. Some say she left her husband willingly, fleeing to be with Paris. Others say she was forced against her will by Paris. When Menelaus discovered she was gone and that Paris had taken her, he declared war on Troy and vowed to get her back, thereby igniting the Trojan War.

Helen’s beauty was legendary and supposedly worth fighting for. She is known as “the face that launched a thousand ships”, a moniker in reference to the fleet Menelaus sent across the Aegean Sea to retrieve her. Mee’s account of Helen is that of a conniving woman willing to do whatever it takes to save herself in this explosive and dangerous world. Helen, however, is just as dangerous and exploits her feminine wiles, much to the aggravation and hatred of every woman in Troy. She manages to slither her way back into her husband’s good graces and thereby secure her safety through her sex appeal.
Helen’s costume underwent many variations before the final version was selected. She needed to be an exaggerated, “sexed-up,” singing, dancing modern adaptation. Initial costume designs did not fully realize the directors’ desire for Helen as an over-the-top, pop culture icon. Because she is trying to appeal to Menelaus’ sensibilities, she employs a military angle. She wears a bra and panty set in a glittery camouflage pattern, fishnets and combat boots. She has a belt made of machine gun bullets slung around her waist as though she has been accessorizing with remnants she has found in the war debris. Helen’s robe is a short satin kimono style, black on the outside and lined in bright pink. The pink lining adds a powerful shock value to an otherwise ordinary black robe and counters the masculinity of the camouflage with a flirty femininity. She is decked out in diamond stud earrings and an enormous diamond wedding ring. A set of dog tags covered in pink crystals complete the look. Her makeup was inspired by that of Avril Lavigne’s since Helen bursts onto the scene belting out Lavigne’s song *Girlfriend*. While the script specifies that Helen is wearing a chemise and nothing else, the directors wanted a much more sexual, over-the-top, pop culture image of Helen. Because of this, Helen’s song was changed from Bow Wow Wow’s *I Want Candy* to the Lavigne song, giving Helen a very current appeal.

Polyxena, at age thirteen, is Hecuba’s youngest daughter. She is definitely her mother’s daughter, strong-willed and determined. Mee describes her as “tarty, not because she is, but because that is the trendy look for girls her age” (Mee “Trojan Women
Ployxena is a dichotomy of woman and child with a healthy dose of irreverent teenager thrown in. She is very sexual and she’s very innocent. She’s young, she longs to simplify her world and yet she has seen so much in this war that she is wiser than that; she knows better. Polyxena is painfully aware of the things she will never experience in life and pensive over the things she has. She is condemned to die atop Achilles’ grave as a sacrifice to the heroic warrior. She accepts her fate; she feels she was born to it. To accentuate her dichotomy between woman and child I incorporated very feminine sexual pieces with punk and child-like ones. She’s of the MTV generation and her family is rich, putting any crazy of-the-moment style at her disposal. She is urban, she’s rich and she is the baby of the family. I pictured her running up and down 5th Avenue buying whatever fun thing happened to catch her eye with not a care in the world. She wears a red satin bustier over a black fishnet top but the bustier has a heart-shaped Hello Kitty cartoon patch on it. Her jeans are hip hugger flares and her shoes are leopard print. She wears white ribbons in her pigtails, which are later stained with blood.

Aeneas is a coward and hero rolled into one. The women of Troy are disgusted with his desertion during the war. Rather than stay and fight like the rest of the men, he ran and hid, saving himself. As a consequence, he is one of the few who escape and Hecuba charges him with saving everyone he can and starting a new life, a new world. Aeneas is also a privileged man, a favorite of the gods. According to myth, Aeneas was the son of Anchises and Aphrodite, cousin to King Priam of Troy. He’s wealthy but he’s
very sheltered. Aeneas is dressed to fit into the affluent world of Troy’s royalty, as he is socially and economically on par with the royal women.

My research for him included images of young royals today – Princes William and Harry of England. Before the war he was rugged, handsome and a bit of a playboy. His look is classic prep school. He wears khaki corduroy pants, a white and blue checked button up shirt and a navy cardigan with a crest on it. The crest is important because it had to be clear he was also wealthy and it functions as some sort of insignia from a private school or rugby team. While Aeneas spends time in the pool at the end of Act I, he only stands in it, rather than being fully immersed. As a result, his shoes were the only costume piece that required special consideration based on the water. He wears sandals because they adequately drain when he exits the water, ensuring the actor’s comfort and also because it is a distinctly Greek look. Act II concludes with an onstage drowning of Aeneas by Dido. His hair is longer and pulled back into a series of braids along his head to keep the hair out of the actor’s face when Dido is drowning him and to give him an imposing Greek warrior feel.

Talthybius is the Greek liaison to the Trojan women. Historically he was herald and friend to Agamemnon. Though typically a minor character, Euripides used him not only as a structural device, but one who, as herald, represents what little element of order and ceremony remain in the midst of war (Gilmartin “Talthybius in The Trojan Women”). He is a slimy person, but only because the war has made him that way. He
has forsaken what he used to stand for in a bid for self-preservation. He does the dirty work for Menelaus. There is a tinge of compassion to him and yet he carries on with his job as best he can, in as detached a manner as possible. He informs the women of their allotment to the Greek men as servants and concubines with as little drama as possible but he makes it clear he takes no joy in delivering such news.

Talthybius is dressed as the typical government official: navy blue pinstripe suit, white shirt and red striped republic-style tie. His shirt is in direct contrast with Hecuba’s, both being white shirts and carrying with them the privileged, white collar status. Yet his remains pristine while Hecuba’s has been ruined, clearly indicating that he is the one in power and that his side has won the war. Talthybius also wears a pair of sunglasses. This is so that the audience never sees his eyes, increasing his “bad guy” factor and taking away the human interaction from him. The dark sunglasses are his way of disarming his opponent and maintaining the upper hand.

Menelaus is Helen’s husband, King of Sparta and the man who spearheaded the Trojan War. The women of Troy are in disbelief that this man has selfishly devastated an entire civilization and its way of life for the sole purpose of retrieving a woman who betrayed and left him. His approach and philosophy, more than anything else, are what drives Hecuba into a rage over the uselessness of war. “Why is it,” she asks, “At the end of war the victors can imagine nothing better than to remake the conditions that are the cause of war?” (Mee “Trojan Women 2.0”). The consequences do not outweigh the
merits for Hecuba, in fact she cannot even begin to understand his motivation. Menelaus is self-obsessed, materialistic and not about to let Paris, or Troy for that matter, get away with stealing his wife lest he appear weak. Helen is his soft spot; he is captivated by her.

Menelaus is driven by very primal instincts: pride, lust, anger, revenge. His clothing reflects his position as top-ranking official in the army. He wears the camouflage battle dress uniform (BDU) as does the rest of the army, but Menelaus' sleeves have been ripped off, he has a helmet, a cloak, and is adorned with various medals and bars. These variations in dress distinguish him as a high-ranking official compared to the chorus of soldiers and also as a bit of a barbarian and rebel. His ripped-off sleeves signify willful destruction of a government issued uniform, which an average subordinate would not do. Menelaus does not play by the rules, but rather serves his own interests first. His cloak and helmet evoke images of ancient war heroes and clearly indicate his superiority, both in his own mind and in the minds of others. The insignia and medals further enhance his image.

The chorus men fill in the ranks of the army and have no other speaking roles with the exception of two men, RayBob and Bill, who are Talthybius' right hand men. Distinguishing these two men from the rest of the chorus was important, due to the nature of their roles. The soldiers' uniforms were to be nondescript in that they should not appear to be from any particular country, but rather be modern military men that would be identifiable in a stereotypical way. Therefore, specific uniform dress codes were not
adhered to and research was gathered from a variety of military-inspired sources. All the Grecian soldiers were dressed in green BDUs, green t-shirts and combat boots. Bill and RayBob were dressed in black pocketed vests rather than the BDU field jackets in order to distinguish them and give them a darker, bulkier, nefarious appearance. They also wore a head bandana and mesh cap in opposition to the solid back Marine caps of the chorus. Dog tags were incorporated into all the chorus men’s uniforms.

Bill and RayBob wore aviator sunglasses to echo the dark glasses worn by Talthybius, visually tying them to him. Additionally, the sunglasses shield the eyes and thereby emotion, making the two men seem cold and disconnected. They also were given black fingerless leather gloves to complete their intimidating look and further distinguish them from the remaining chorus men. All the men were adorned with multiple ammunition belts and cartridge pockets. My intention for all the soldiers was to have as much military paraphernalia and accessories as possible adorning them, giving them a mechanical, emotionless, robotic sensibility.

The chorus women function as the lower working class of Troy; almost slave-like in their relationship to the royal family. The script identifies them as dark-skinned, third world women, primarily as a juxtaposition to the upper classes (Mee “Trojan Women 2.0”). On a larger, more contemporary scale, their societal position is indicative of cultures experiencing genocide, war and an utter devastation of their way of life. This way of life is thrown into high relief against the image of an all-consuming, all-powerful
and oblivious America. Vibrant colors and patterns of ethnic clothing mixed with old, cast-off western European pieces of clothing seemed to be the hallmark in many third-world countries. Again, this type of American influence among poor nations underscores the pervasiveness and dominance of U.S. culture.

The chorus costumes were collaged together in such a way that there was a sense of non-European ethnicity, particularly in color and pattern, with a mix of pop-culture American logos, t-shirts and jeans. All of the women wore headdresses and wraps or shawls. Layering became an important way to achieve a disheveled, tattered look. All the costumes were very heavily distressed; these women were impoverished to start with and had just lived through a war. Shoes were a mix of sneakers and sandals and all women were wearing simple, wooden bead jewelry.

In Act II all actors, with the exception of Aeneas, play different roles. Act II is set in Carthage, which Mee reimagines as a modern health spa. Aeneas, along with members of the Trojan army, have escaped Troy and fled in order to rebuild a new civilization. On their journey they stumble upon Carthage, which is a “feminine utopia” of sorts; a world quite the opposite of Troy. The society is a matriarchal one that harkens back to those of Old Europe’s early civilizations: sedentary, peaceful and art-loving (Appendix A). In order to adequately convey Carthage as the diametric opposite of Troy, the directors and I decided to use a completely white color palette for the women native to Carthage. This is
a very bold look, but one that speaks quite clearly to the type of world the soldiers are entering, especially after the aesthetic of Act I.

The chorus women are sleek "lounging goddesses" and appear as a welcome respite to the travel-weary, defeated Trojan soldiers. The women all wear spa-inspired clothing layered over the top of swim suits because the pool is prominently featured in Act II as well as Act I. Some of the clothing was yoga-inspired, others were intended for swimming and some were athletic workout clothes. Everything was a very bright white shade and all the materials were cotton, lycra or rayon. All the fabrics were light and airy with a flowy quality to them.

In addition, all of the costume pieces were very body-conscious and sensually revealing. I felt it was important that every garment was simple and clean, with no other hint of color or adornment. Everything needed to look as though it could easily slip on and off with no fuss and appear comfortable and flexible. This is also, in part, a way of visually tying the scene to the historical Greek look. The pieces were all very simple and any detailing came in a twist, drape or raunching of the fabric. The actors' makeup was warm and healthy-looking with a bronze and pink color palette and their hair was styled in a natural, wavy, tousled manner.

Dido is the queen of Carthage and the principle woman in Act II. Originally, Dido appears in the Aeneid as the founder and queen of Carthage. She was a goddess who later transformed into a human form to rule (Fox "Dido's Passion"). Mee portrays
her in a mystical light, as someone who reads tarot cards and believes in horoscopes. She
appears to be a spiritual fortuneteller or mystic. Her costume needed to identify her as
the queen, while still allowing her to blend in with the color and silhouette of the other
women. In order to achieve this, Dido was the only woman wearing a dress; all the
others were in shorts, pants or bikinis with sarongs. She wore a bold white headband,
making her the only woman with anything on her head. Additionally, Dido was the only
woman wearing any jewelry. Because of her gypsy-like qualities, I chose bolder pieces
of jewelry: large hoop earrings and several massive rings. The metallic jewelry gives her
an extra shine that draws the eye more towards her and their geometric nature recalls
ancient civilizations.

Her costume design was based on a particular piece of research I found by a
modern designer that evokes a 1920s, *Great Gatsby* feel (Appendix D-1). This design
inspired all the costumes for the chorus women in Act II. Carthage, much like F. Scott
Fitzgerald’s Long Island Sound, is a place where the women spend their days lounging;
pampering themselves with nothing in particular to occupy their time. This design
inspiration also related back to my concept for the royal family in Act I. Again, an
aristocratic, idealistic way of life is referenced, this time in relation to the characters of
Fitzgerald’s novel.

Dido’s dress had a dropped waist and spaghetti straps with a sash tied around the
hips. A Kama Sutra scene required that all the actors were able to disrobe onstage in
some capacity. The loose cut of the bodice allowed for her to gracefully slip the dress down off her shoulders. Due to the spa setting, as well as the potential for any number of the actors entering into the pool, two-piece swimsuits were decided upon as the undergarments to which all the women would strip down.

The only male in the world of Carthage was a eunuch pool boy whose job it was to wait on the ladies. In keeping with the color palette, he was also costumed entirely in white. I chose airy linen pants and a matching sleeveless shirt that was worn partially unbuttoned. The pool boy's costume was a relaxed, pool-side look that complimented that of the women well and fit in perfectly with the spa setting.

The Trojan soldiers arrive with Aeneas in Carthage, having fled Troy in order to build a new civilization. They are all dressed in matching BDU pants. The Trojan soldiers are dressed in the desert fatigues, in order to distinguish them from the Greek soldiers in Act I who were dressed in jungle green BDUs. They wear tan t-shirts, dog tags and combat boots.

These men were also involved in the Kama Sutra scene and were required to undress as well. In order to keep with the tight color palette and create a very pure, clean, exotic tableaux for the Kama Sutra scene the soldiers all wore white boxer briefs under their fatigues so that they would appear only in white once they were undressed. Their fatigues were heavily distressed and dirty, as though fresh from the war. This created for a tension between the men and the women and their worlds when they met. There is then
a merging of worlds as they fall in love, visually represented by the men appearing in white undergarments, mirroring the clothes of the women. Plush white terrycloth bathrobes and waist towels were donned by the men after the Kama Sutra scene.

Within this production, costumes can be broken down into two groups: Act I and Act II. The costumes of Act II are primarily driven by an overall look: the striking white color on the entire cast. This is in contrast to Act I, which is heavily character driven, each costume specifically defining a person and their traits.
CHAPTER 4

THE PROCESS

This chapter will explore the process of creating the costumes for Trojan Women 2.0. I will discuss challenges, changes in the designs based on various unforeseen circumstances, budgetary needs, and restrictions or assets based on time, labor and available costume stock.

The final costume renderings were presented to the production team on September 11, 2007. The designs then moved into the Costume Studio on September 19, 2007 to begin construction and assembly. The cast consisted of twenty students, both graduate and undergraduate. Nineteen of the actors were double cast in roles.

Because of the unique nature of the show, very little was pulled from the university’s existing costume stock. The tight color palette in Act II and the style and silhouette in Act I required very specific costume pieces to be sought out. The gowns for Andromache and Cassandra were built, as was a satin robe for Helen and a ball gown skirt for Hecuba. Fabric for Andromache and Cassandra’s gowns were discovered in the Costume Studio’s stock. This significantly cut down the projected cost of each of those costumes. The fabric for Helen’s robe and Hecuba’s skirt were purchased at a local Jo-Ann Fabric store. Nearly all the remaining garments were purchased, including the
women's spa wear in Act II and separate sets of army fatigues for the men in both Act I and Act II.

Costume designs were presented to the cast members at the first read-through of the script on September 24, 2007. While reactions were generally very positive, some of the female actors were surprised at the revealing nature of the designs they would be wearing in Act II. I was somewhat concerned that they had not been warned during the audition process that this production would feature clothing that exposed the body to such an extent. At this point I became concerned that the women would be hesitant to wear the costumes. I encouraged them to speak with me personally about any reservations they were having and wanted to work with the women to make them feel as comfortable as possible. The directors were made aware of these concerns and were willing to adapt blocking if the need arose in order to accommodate modesty issues. Additionally, double-faced tape was provided for all of them to secure their bathing suits as needed.

As soon as measurements were obtained from the cast members, mock-ups were started for the two more complex gowns. Each of the gowns was assigned to costume graduate students Crystal Herman and Elisa O'Neal for construction. Herman was also assigned Hecuba's skirt. One of the studio's experienced undergraduate students, Marysha Sarris, made Helen's robe. Rehearsal skirts were provided within the first weeks of rehearsal so that the women wearing gowns could get used to negotiating the complicated set.
The first week in October I began shopping for the chorus costumes, both men’s and women’s. My desire was to get the majority of those garments purchased so that I could quickly begin fittings for the bulk of the cast. The Act I women’s chorus costumes were purchased at local thrift stores and Act I and II military outfits were all purchased at the local Army Navy surplus store. Fitting these costumes promptly was also necessary because all of them required heavy amounts of distressing, a process that would require ample amounts of time. Assistant Professor Kristine Kearney and I decided that all the costumes needed to be completed a week before the first dress rehearsal in order to distress them. The build schedule was then adjusted accordingly.

A publicity photo shoot was scheduled for October 4, 2007 and included four of the main characters. Two of the characters’ costumes were being built by the shop and were unavailable for the shoot. Extra time was required to find comparable costumes in stock and fit them on all the characters. However, this time also allowed me to develop a clearer idea of the smaller details of each character, i.e. hair styles, jewelry, etc. Additionally, it gave the directors, Ryan and Thompson, a chance to see what was being represented visually and to bring up any potential concerns. This is also a good chance to put any pieces I had planned on using in the show on the actor’s body and see it under comparable stage lighting. In this instance I was able to gauge the extent to which the clothing needed to be distressed. Menelaus’ cloak had been distressed, and I was surprised by just how much it faded away under the lights.

39
At this point in the process shoes became a vital concern. Initially I had hoped that the option of going barefoot would be feasible for many of the women. However, it became clear very early on in the rehearsal process that footwear which offered both protection and traction was a necessity due to the metal materials from which the set was made. Additionally, it was important to put the footwear into rehearsal earlier than is typical so that the actors could become accustomed to performing their movements. This required special consideration because this show was movement-based and heavily impacted by the viewpoints acting method. This also allowed us to troubleshoot problems early on with fit and traction. Water retention also became a problem with some of the footwear. Andromache and Cassandra both wore “hermes” style dance sandals. These nude colored sandals laced across the foot and up the ankle and provided a protective leather sole. These shoes blended well with the actors’ skin tones so that they were virtually undetectable on stage, giving the illusion that they were barefoot, which was the initial look desired. Sandals were also a good option because they allowed water to immediately drain away from the shoe. Other women who spent far less time in the water were able to negotiate well in ballet flats. At that time in the process it was still unclear exactly which characters would be in the water and to what extent, therefore remaining flexible was important.

I was able to begin working out the specific logistics of the production and how it was to unfold. There were a number of logistical issues to resolve in terms of the change
over from Act I to Act II. All the women in Act I needed ample amounts of makeup that would resemble dirt smeared on their skin. This all needed to be cleaned off before Act II, in addition to complete costume changes for all of them. Further complicating the matter was the water onstage. All the makeup needed to be set so that it wouldn't immediately wash off when it came into contact with the water. I researched specialty makeups and sealers and found that the usual dark cake makeups found in many basic makeup kits could be made water proof by applying it with a sealer. However, this would also make it more time-consuming to remove. I asked only the women who were going to be in direct contact with the water to use the sealer, eliminating as much difficulty and time as possible. Additionally, the wardrobe crew was asked to be ready and waiting with makeup remover to aid in the process and ensure the change was able to be performed in a timely fashion. Other decisions had to be made in the same vein. Any sort of aging or graying products became impossible to use in hair, as it would be unfeasible to remove in time. Early in the design process I had hoped to cover Menelaus in tattoos, but these also proved too difficult to remove in the time allowed and were quickly decided against.

Shoes were put into rehearsal on October 9. At this point much of the scenery was in place and the cast was able to rehearse on the challenging set. In its final state, the set included two trusses laid across the pool of water, one of which functioned as a "stairway" to an upper platform. Chains were suspended from the lighting grid to
provide the actors something to brace themselves with. Two very steep ramps constructed of expanded steel led up to two platforms of the same material. A higher platform connected the lower two. Access was also provided to each of the lower platforms by metal ladders on either side. Once the choreography was rehearsed on the set, with the characters’ actual shoes, I was able to identify potential problems and safety hazards. The first issue that arose was the incline angle of the ramps. They were of such an extreme nature that some of the actors were having trouble making their way up and down them. I applied dance rubber to the soles of some of the shoes to add traction. However, this still was not enough for many of the actors to feel safe. After a meeting with the scenic designer, he and I decided that he could apply the same rubber to the ramps in long strips, giving the rubber on the shoes something to grip to.

Other shoes, such as combat boots, could not take dance rubber due to the irregular surface of the sole. In these cases a shoe roughing tool was used to scuff the bottom of the shoe and give the sole more traction. Both of these solutions allowed for the actors to perform adequately. One exception was Helen’s shoes. Based on the actor’s physical stature and character I had purchased high heeled boots for her. The ramps were impossible for her to negotiate in them and the directors felt that altering her blocking so that she could avoid the ramps would compromise the scene so the design had to be changed. Ultimately I purchased a pair of flat-soled, ankle length combat boots for her, which she was able to easily perform in.
Another shoe problem came in the form of the men’s shoes in Act II. After they remove their combat boots for the Kama Sutra scene and the entire costume color palette changed to white, they needed shoes that would protect their feet from the expanded steel grating while still blending in with a spa atmosphere. My initial thought was to use spa slippers but the backless design of the slippers would have made it impossible for the actors to ascend the ramps while keeping the shoes on their feet. The Studio manager, Woods, and I discussed the option of adding elastic bands to the back of the shoes, but they still would not offer much in the way of traction or a thick enough sole for support. This option also turned out to be cost prohibitive. In order to accommodate the budget and the needs of the actors, I pulled several pairs of rubber soled slip on shoes from stock and painted them white. This was not an ideal solution, as the look of the shoe was not exactly what I had wanted. It was acceptable for a few rehearsals and then the paint began to badly chip off. I was unhappy with the look. The actors were uncomfortable in the shoes and had requested to go barefoot many times so we finally tried a rehearsal without shoes for that scene. I was concerned that the set would be a problem for them to negotiate, even for a short time, without shoes. The actors were surprisingly comfortable on the set and were able to move without the shoes gracefully. The decision was made to go without, although shoes were provided for them to make their way back downstairs to the green room safely.
At this point in time, the directors had completed most of the blocking for the production. Virginia Logan, the actor playing Andromache, was the actor spending the majority of her stage time in Act I in the water, in a gown. I chose these fabrics because of the man-made nature of the textile, it absorbed and held very little water. Still, there was concern about the amount of water she would bring out of the pool and spread onstage. For the actor’s final fitting we dressed her in her gown, shoes and jewelry, styled her hair and then asked her to step into the shower in the dressing room to experiment with the water. The fabric absorbed a minimal amount of water, making the runoff slight. Thompson and Ryan had already planned to include a sequence in which cast members toweled off the floor. The water immersion came at the point of one of Andromache’s longer monologues, in which she exits the pool and then paces around the stage. Her sandals were suede on the inside with dance rubber on the soles and gave her plenty of traction, even after they became wet. In the fitting it became clear that the actor’s hair would have to be secured back so that it would not get wet, stick to her face and obscure her vision or the audience’s vision of her.

I attended a run-through of the play on October 20\textsuperscript{th}. The show had been entirely staged, for the most part, so I was able to see how the actors were moving around on the rehearsal set pieces, how the women were working with their rehearsal skirts, and see any other elements that may have been unexpected. One of the major things that needed to be addressed was the choreography of the clothing removal and subsequent redressing.
surrounding the Kama Sutra scene. This was being mimed during rehearsal and attention was not being paid to the details of where the clothing was placed when it was removed, when the clothes were put back on, what happened to the men's military clothes, particularly their boots, which did not go back on, etc. I suggested to the directors and the stage manager that the actors should physically rehearse taking off garments so that everyone involved would be more visually aware of what was happening and what needed to occur when. This was also important when rehearsals moved into the theatre space and the actors were able to work onstage with the water. The directors and I were able to discern when would be the best time for all the changes to happen and who would be responsible for bringing the leftover garments offstage. At this time I was also able to create a list of clothing that needed to be preset onstage.

The final fitting for Ashlee Mundy, who played Cassandra, was very helpful in clearing up many things. The directors were becoming increasingly concerned that the length of the gowns were going to pose mobility problems for the actors wearing them. Cassandra's in particular was a concern because my design featured a train that floated along behind her as she walked. Thompson and Ryan were concerned that she may trip on it or that it would become entangled in the scenery. We discussed the possibility of cutting the length down if necessary. We scheduled her fitting for a time when the actor was available to work on the set in her costume. I asked her to perform her complex movements, such as scaling the truss, while in her gown. At this time we were able to set
a hem length on the gown that would not interfere with her movement. I was also able to coach her as to the best ways to negotiate the set while wearing the gown and suggest possible movement options to best suit the costume.

Allowing her to experiment on the set also brought to our attention a few other issues. She had been rehearsing in nude dance tights in order to give her otherwise bare legs a bit of protection and that was a garment I ended up incorporating into her final costume. We added some “dirt” to them and they were virtually undetectable onstage, appearing as a nude leg. She also spent a lot of time climbing up and down the truss while using the hanging chains. The chains bothered her hands so I pulled from stock a pair of knit fingerless gloves for her to wear. A fingerless style was important so that she could grip onto the set and climb around easily, but they provided protection for the palms of her hands. The style worked quite well with her costume, as her character is completely crazy and would conceivably wear such a thing as an extreme fashion statement in contrast to her gown.

When fitting Hecuba’s ball gown, I also took the actor out to the set to experiment with the garment. I asked Jessica Podewell to maneuver in her skirt on set and perform all her complex movements. With all the gowns I wanted as much fabric as was possible to remain without it harming or encumbering the actor. I wanted to keep a large silhouette because of the status definition associated with these women. Allowing them to get onto the set, try their movements and then have the garments tailored specifically
for their personal staging challenges assuaged many fears and allowed me to address problems and concerns individually.

A day devoted entirely to distressing the show was scheduled for the following day, on October 21st. Professor Kearney, Assistant Costume Designer Elli Loomis and I spent six and a half hours on a Sunday making the clothing look as though it had been through a war. The main focus that day was the Act I women’s clothes and Act I soldier’s uniforms. The uniforms needed to be completed quickly due to another photo call which was scheduled for the following evening.

Logistically, it was easier to work on distressing large groups at the same time. The men and women of the chorus worked as a whole unit, in terms of the level of aging required. We began working with a combination of dye and acrylic paint to achieve the look desired. In addition, the clothes all needed to be torn and ragged, which was achieved by scissors and a shoe roughing tool that is typically used to scuff the soles of shoes for traction. Professor Kearney mixed dye in the dye vat and put the base coat of stains on selected garments. We found that the dye was a good base coat for staining the clothes and taking down the overall brightness of the color, while paint was necessary for creating the actual appearance of dirt, soot, mud and sweat. Loomis and I used acrylic paint and sponges to apply the thicker layers of color on the costumes. While we were able to complete the two sets of clothes for Act I, the gowns, as well as the uniforms for Act II still needed to be done at a later time.
The *Columbus Dispatch* requested that they do a photo shoot for a publicity article they were writing. At the request of the *Dispatch*, a very large portion of the cast was to be included in the photo shoot. However, it was necessary for Professor Kearney and me to limit the number of actors that would be involved due to a number of restrictions. First and foremost was that many of the costumes were simply not ready to be worn as of yet. After these discussions the directors chose Helen’s entrance scene with the chorus of army men to be reenacted for the photographer. These costume pieces were all built and/or purchased, but needed finishing work, such as distressing, to be ready for photos.

The photo shoot, held on October 22, went smoothly and gave me another chance to see costumes on characters before dress rehearsal. The men came together nicely as a unit, and they were able to suggest slight ways, in how they wore the clothes, of differentiating themselves from one another in the military BDU’s. Some wore their sleeves rolled up, others had their hats on backwards. Helen’s costume looked wonderful as a nice contrast to the men, but her hair and makeup needed some adjusting after seeing it onstage. Her hair was getting in her face and obscuring the audience view of her. This was something I was able to subsequently address at the first dress rehearsal later in the week.

Once water was introduced into rehearsals, several costume issues arose. Bruno Lovric, the actor playing Aeneas, was wearing a loafer style of shoe that was made of
plastic rather than leather so that it would not be harmed by the water. However, the 
plastic did not allow for any of the water to drain out of the shoe after he exited the pool, 
creating an uncomfortable situation for the actor and producing unwanted, comical 
squishing sounds as he walked. One of the only options available was to switch his shoes 
to sandals, an option that actually worked quite well as it incorporated more of a Greek 
element into his costume that had not previously existed.

Lovric’s long hair also became an issue in the water. It stuck to his face when he 
was immersed in the final drowning scene, making it difficult for him to take breaths 
during his thrashing and struggling. The directors suggested it be pulled back into tight 
braids against his head, hoping that it would serve not only to keep it out of his face, but 
lend him a more imposing Greek warrior feel. This solution worked quite well and I was 
pleasantly surprised by how much of a difference it made in terms of making him seem 
fiercer.

Crew watch was scheduled for that same night as the Columbus Dispatch photo 
shoot. While the photo shoot was taking place Woods was orienting the wardrobe crew 
to the Costume Studio and making them aware of their duties involved in running 
wardrobe for the show. There were three undergraduate students working on the 
wardrobe crew. Once the rehearsal started, Professor Kearney and I sat with the 
wardrobe crew and pointed out problem areas of which they needed to be aware. This 
helped the costume crew understand the basic progression of the show as well as which
of the costumes the actors should be wearing and when. The production had no quick changes, but the entire cast did need to change at intermission, including the removal of the “dirt” makeup.

One of the most urgent changes was getting all of the women out of their war-torn clothes and into their white spa clothes, as well as the removal of their dirt makeup. The actor playing Polyxena also had a latex wound on her throat and bloody makeup that needed to be removed quickly.

The water on set resulted in large amounts of laundry, including wet towels, in addition to the clothing that needed to be laundered as well. Because another production was running at approximately the same time in the Thurber Theatre, adequate laundry time for both plays was difficult to organize. The result was that the wardrobe crews for both productions shared laundry responsibilities with the scenic crew in order to complete it each day.

Several of the actors’ shoes were immersed in the water during the show each night and needed to be laid out on a large sheet of paper to dry. I was careful to choose shoes which had very little padding inside, in order to allow them to dry completely overnight. Additionally, Andromache’s gown, which was completely immersed for the entirety of Act I, had to be hung in the shower after each performance for it to dry.

The first dress rehearsal was held on the 27th of October. Costume graduate students Crystal Herman and Elisa O’Neal, as well as Jan Woods and Professor Keamey
were in attendance to help me and the actors. One of the first issues that arose concerned the women's head wraps. The opening scene was very physical and the women are thrown about, causing a few of the wraps to slip off their heads. In some cases, we were able to solve this issue by amending the way they had been tied on. In other situations, the length was too much for the actor to negotiate and the wrap had to be shortened. The only other problem I encountered in Act I had to do with Zack Sciranka, a male actor masquerading as one of the enslaved women of Troy. The directors had included him during the casting process as one of the Trojan soldiers who had hidden from the fighting; cowering among the slave women, disguised as one of them. The short-sleeved t-shirt I had chosen for him revealed his masculine arms, defeating the illusion of him being a woman. The directors also felt he did not look like a woman. To remedy this solution I added a long-sleeved t-shirt underneath the short-sleeved shirt. I asked Sciranka to add some blush, mascara and eyeliner in order to seem a bit more feminine.

One of the challenges of having two directors is that there are invariably disagreements of approach between them. A number of times during various tech table discussions one director would contradict the other about costume and makeup issues from one rehearsal to the next. For example, one of the chorus women appeared too beautiful to one director so I asked the actor to take her bruise and dirt makeup further. At the next rehearsal, the other director felt the makeup looked too extreme. One director would raise an issue, I would address it the following day, and then the other director
would voice a concern contradicting the solution. At times it was difficult to strike a balance. While this was frustrating, I found that it freed me up to make decisions on my own that were based on my instincts, rather than rely on a director to dictate answers to me. In the end, I felt that this made me a more confident and self-reliant designer.

Additional costume notes resulting from the first dress rehearsal pertained to the distressing of the clothes. I was unable to complete all of the distressing for the men’s soldier uniforms in Act II and the directors wanted to see them very highly distressed. Much of the soldier uniforms in Act I needed to be distressed and painted even further. The camouflage prints were very difficult to sufficiently distress due to the range of colors already present in the material. I found that unwatered-down black paint had the greatest visual impact. There was also some concern from the directors that the gowns had been distressed a bit too artfully. They needed to look like they had more dirt on them, rather than just appearing stained.

By the second dress rehearsal most of the big problems had been resolved. There was a logistical problem with Helen’s microphone pack because she had so little clothing on that it was difficult to secure it tightly to her body. The pack could not hang unsecured because the sound quality was being compromised. She also needed to be able to remove the mic pack from her costume quickly. The pack and headset were handed off to another actor as he exited so that Helen would be free of it after her musical number. The result was that it needed to be worn on her bullet belt and some of the bullets needed
to be removed in order to clear a space for it. The belt also required some maintenance throughout the show due to the poor quality of the plastic from which it was made. The belt, which was purchased from an online costume store, was made in a way that the bullets had a tendency to fall out during any sort of movement. The bullets were glued to a thick ribbon of petersham belting that was shaped on a dress form to fit the actor’s body. Though touch-ups were required throughout the run of the show, the belt remained intact once the petersham was added.

By the third and final dress rehearsal I discovered that it was difficult to keep the distressed clothes from tearing apart even further. When the fabrics were torn and shredded, the integrity of the clothing was compromised and they continued to tear further. Many garments had to be repaired during the run of the show because they had ripped beyond the extent desired. Further painting and distressing continued right up until the last dress rehearsal to achieve the desired look. The production was rather dimly lit, which was appropriate for the act, but made it challenging to achieve a dirty look. Much of the paint and dye was lost in the shadow.

Sciranka’s costume was still undergoing some changes. I added a shawl to conceal a bit more of his physique. His head wrap needed to be bobby pinned to his head because he did not have the long hair the women did to tie it around. Unfortunately, once all this was added, he got tangled up in the clothes when he needed to remove his shirt onstage for the revelation of his masculinity. I was able to choreograph this with him so
that he discreetly removed his shawl just prior to the moment when he needed to remove his shirt. The head wrap could no longer be pinned into his hair, since it would not easily slip off that way. After these adjustments were made, he was able to easily perform the scene.

While the process of designing *Trojan Women 2.0* was made challenging by a number of factors, overall the process was a smooth one. The set posed the biggest difficulty in terms of resolving costume issues. The steep ramps, pool of water, trussing, steal and chains all required extra attention to ensure the safety of the actors and the condition of the costumes.
CHAPTER 5

AN EVALUATION OF THE DESIGN

_Trojan Women 2.0_ was a production that provided me plenty of challenges as a designer. It was the most complex design I have executed at The Ohio State University and it served as a beneficial and cumulative graduate school design. The production was wide-ranging and contained several varied aspects that allowed me to demonstrate a host of design skills. The Euripides portion of _Trojan Women 2.0_ gave me the Classical Greek historical period to explore and pull design ideas from. The mythological nature of the production required a creative and fantastical element to the design. This aspect in particular was the most challenging and rewarding part of this design. My previous designs for The Ohio State University include a contemporary design and a somewhat strict historical representation. However, this production required the design to be taken further, beyond any sort of simple period recreation. I felt that my designs were pushed into a new and broader range. Answers to some of the more difficult design questions I encountered were not found easily in period costume reference books, but required creative thinking and application.

Overall I was quite pleased with the costume design. In large part, the design for this production was about juxtaposition. Tension between groups of characters was vital to the story. The look of the high fashion gowns against the deconstructed world of Troy
worked well to highlight the devastation of war in Act I. The gowns created a powerful visual contradiction when paired with the aesthetic of the scenic design. The fabrics for the gowns were successful choices, given the water element. The fabrics stood up quite well to the wear and tear and absorbed little water. The actors wearing them were able to perform with ease, despite the complicated scenery.

The women of the royal family appeared appropriately elegant and disheveled at the same time. When designing these gowns, I had initial reservations about putting them on a set such as the one created. Creating to these gorgeous dresses out of such rich fabrics and then destroy them was difficult for me to justify initially. However, the process of letting go of those inhibitions and allowing the feel of the play dictate what needed to happen to the costumes was significant for me. I found that this was a good exercise in blending construction aspects with design aspects in order to create an appropriate mood for the production.

I felt the distinction between the slave women of the chorus and the royal family also worked well, evoking themes of current international strife and third-world hardships. Act II contrasted extremely well with Act I. The shift that was made between the two acts was very clear. Though initially I was nervous about the choice to go with an entirely white color palette for Act II, it worked well and was very striking in appearance. The white color streamlined the entire act and allowed the lighting designer to change the audience’s focus easily.
Lighting also became very important to the costumes during the Kama Sutra scene. Because the actors were wearing very little clothing during the scene and because the Bowen theatre space is small and intimate, it could have been a very distracting scene that would have taken the audience out of the play. The fact that every actor was in white and was beautifully backlit allowed for the audience to focus more on the overall feeling evoked by the scene. Ultimately, I think the white was a good decision that had a huge impact visual impact and served the purposes of the act well.

I was very satisfied with the collaboration between scenic designer Matthew McCarren, lighting designer Anthony Pellecchia, and myself. The three of us have previously worked together as a design team and I found that our ideas and end goals were often very similar. While each of our designs presented challenges for one another, we were able to overcome most of the obstacles in a successful manner.

The majority of the things I would change about the production involve the final appearance of some of the costumes. While Menelaus’ costume mirrored the rendering almost exactly, I felt it lost something when translated to the stage. His costume, while adequate, lacked a desired fierceness and grittiness that was required for that character. Dido’s initial costume also could have distinguished her a bit more as the queen. Perhaps an ornate headdress would have given her a more regal appearance. A heavily accentuated makeup design might also have aided her. While I was happy with the line
and the texture of the chorus women’s costumes in Act I, I think incorporating a broader range of colors would have given the group more visual interest.

Aeneas’s costume is an example of a design that did not turn out as expected, but worked better. The changes that had to be made to his costume due to various unforeseen circumstances resulted in a stronger costume than I had originally designed. Switching from loafers to sandals was needed. However, the sandals incorporated another Greek element into the design that worked quite well. His hair was pulled back into tight braids along his head in an effort to keep his long hair out of his face while in the water. The result was a hairstyle reminiscent of a Greek warrior, which fit his character well.

Overall, I think the design resulted in a beautiful production that was both striking and thought-provoking. From this design I have learned the importance of an integrated design team and the benefits reaped from those relationships. Had all the elements of this production not come together the way they had, I’m sure the costume designs would have suffered. The impact certainly would not have been as great.

The most significant challenge of this process, by far, was working with the water. In terms of preparedness, I now feel much more equipped to handle aquatic circumstances on stage. My predominant concern early in the process was not knowing exactly which actors would be going into the water. Remaining flexible and being open to the directors’ changes in the way the production was staged was important. I made the decision to provide each and every actor with an under layer that was able to
accommodate the water safely. This was a concern due to the fact that all the costumes in Act II were white and would have become transparent had they not been lined. Dressing all of the women in a swimsuit layer ensured that no matter how the blocking was changed in the rehearsal process, none of the costumes would pose a problem. This sort of flexibility was the best way to be prepared and anticipate potential problems. I felt that the gowns worked really well in the water. Due to the fact that lightweight materials were intentionally chosen to prohibit extreme absorption of water, the gowns never posed a problem, despite their fullness and length.

This production has also underscored the importance of being able to freely design with a bold approach. As a young designer, I am aware that this is something I am tentative about but I feel that with this project I made a significant amount of professional growth. With these designs I think I was finally able to make the transition beyond literal costumes to choices that were much more figurative or allegorical.
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APPENDIX A: DIRECTORS’ CONCEPT
Trojan Woman 2.0 – Building the Collage

The World of the Play
And so my plays are shattered and fucked up and full of wreckage and stumbling and awkwardness and making some effort not to be civilized. And that feels like me. That feels like it works with me, and if I would get a lot of people to feel okay about that world too, then I’ve made the world a safe place for me to live in and I’m no longer threatened. The motivation to write a play should be life and death. If you’re not writing for those stakes, you’re just a dilettante. (Charles Mee from “Mee and Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 97)

In that regard, I suppose the motivation to put on a play should be life and death as well. We live in a place where we are sheltered from the devastation of wars that are currently being waged as we read this in the safety of this solid room. Women in Darfur are being raped and mutilated; children are being shot and whole villages burned. A suicide bombing may be happening at this moment. Genocide is unimaginable, but it’s going on right now. The unimaginable is not acceptable.

I like the idea that if you show the truth of human life, you are inherently showing that human beings are not condemned to live the lives they’ve always lived. And that’s the way in which I write political plays. I don’t write issue plays that have an answer to political or social problems of the day. I write plays that really speak, at a different level of engagement, about what it is to be human and what is possible for a human being to be. (Charles Mee from “Mee on Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 89)

Acts of peace, love, tenderness, generosity, mutual respect, equality, giving, sharing and forgiveness seem to be what is best about being human. These acts elicit joy, elation, giddiness, sexual passion, trust and sentimentality. Acts of war, hate, betrayal, violence, disrespect, disregard and vengeance seem to be what is worst about being human. These acts elicit rage, bloodlust, jealousy, envy, pain, suffering, sexual aggression, distrust and cynicism. Mee has all of this in his play. He puts on stage all of the possibilities. He asks big questions, and posits the possibility of change.

The “lives [we] have always lived” according to Mee center on the notion that “many ancient cities were built, invaded, destroyed and rebuilt countless times, particularly the rich, beautiful and easy to reach cities of the Mediterranean. The ancients, as invaders, or inhabitants, found themselves again and again in ruined cities, and set out to build new ones, but as shown by Trojan Women, a Love Story, ruin was built into the construction of each new city from the beginning. Aeneas is sent out of the ruins of Troy by Queen
Hecuba not to build a more humane city, but amore powerful one that could finally destroy the Greeks who had destroyed Troy.” (“The Trojan Women a Love Story: A Postmodern Semiotics of the Tragic”, Sarah Bryant- Bertail, pg. 43)

In Act II of the play Aeneas makes an unplanned stop in Carthage on his way to found Rome per Hecuba’s request. He encounters Dido and falls in love. Dido asks him to stay. Aeneas is torn between love and duty. He tells Dido “If I stay I’m afraid I’ll never leave. But I’ll stay from weakness, from failure to keep my word, no strength.” (Trojan Women 2.0 – Online Version, pg. 87) For Aeneas, love equals weakness and vengeance is the measure of strength. Men cannot be weak. Men must be strong. Aeneas chooses to leave Dido. Dido responds by attempting to drown Aeneas in the Jacuzzi.

Dido’s love turns into an act of violence to salvage love. As Mee suggests, being human is indeed complex. In fact, it’s exhausting, which is the final image Mee leaves us with at the end of the play. Dido and Aeneas are prostrate on the floor faced in opposite directions. Nothing has been resolved, but at least we have exhausted the possibilities.

Mee is not just dealing with love in the man/woman sense. Mee is dealing with love in the “big love” sense. Can we love more than we hate? Can we overcome hate and eliminate acts of vengeance? “Is the absence of justice the same as injustice? Must we choose between a justice that perpetuates division, hate and war, and an injustice that leads to peace and reconciliation?” (“It’s a Nightmare Really”, D.J. Hopkins and Shelly Orr, pg. 18) In Mee’s play Big Love, Bella, the matriarch of the play, proclaims at the play’s end that there will be no justice – no retributive act – for the sake of healing. In Trojan Women 2.0, Hecuba begins the play with this belief, but she succumbs to her pain and gives over to rage. She says “…if only I could understand/ as though all the world’s suffering/ were only meant to assist me/ to attain an understanding/ as though some human empathy/ could contain it and make it right/ no/ this pain must be answered with pain/ this savagery with savagery in kind.” (Trojan Women 2.0 – Online Version, pg 40)

This seems to be the credo we humans live by. It’s what propelled us into Afghanistan and Iraq after the attacks on the World Trade Center. Our need for vengeance is more powerful than our desire for forgiveness and healing. It would seem in the world of this play and in our contemporary society that forgiveness and healing are sentimental notions. Aeneas defines sentiment as false hope. He and Dido engage in the following exchange:
Dido
Why don’t you stay?

Aeneas
This is a woman’s world.

Dido
A woman’s world?
What’s that?

Aeneas
I don’t know…
It’s not a world I’ve made.
The world I promised I would make.

Dido
What world was that?

Aeneas
A world without false hope.
A world not built on sentiment.
Ideas we used to have about how things could be
before we learned
in our time
who we really are. (Trojan Women 2.0, pg. 82-83)

Patriarchal convictions square off against matriarchal ideals in this play. In Act I we get
the description of a feminist utopia which nostalgically harkens back to the time of “‘Old
Europe,’ Europe’s first civilization. Dating back at least 5000 years (perhaps even
25,000 years) before the rise of male religions, Old Europe was a matrifocal, sedentary,
peaceful, art-loving, earth and sea bound culture that worshipped the Great Goddesses.”
(Goddesses in Everywoman, Jean Shinoda-Bolen, M.D., pg. 20) Sometime between 4500
B.C. and 2400 B.C., partifocal, Indo-European invaders “imposed their patriarchal
culture and their warrior religion on the conquered people.” (Bolen, pg. 20) In Trojan
Women 2.0, the hope for a return to this type of utopia is viewed by the men and
ultimately by many of the women as purely sentimental, as a nostalgic desire.
It is fitting that the play begins and ends with the absolutely truthful, but ultimately "sentimental" song *All The Way* with the lead-in lyric "when somebody loves you, it’s no good unless he loves you all the way." If Aeneas loved Dido "all the way" he would stay with her and give up his vengeful mission; love would trump hate/duty. In an ironic twist, Dido’s attempted murder of Aeneas born out of her need for revenge at his betrayal is an act that evokes love in the larger sense. She is not killing him per se, but she is destroying his vengeful spirit. Of course, Aeneas doesn’t die, drags himself out of the tub and collapses on the floor beside Dido.

In the traditional story of Dido and Aeneas, Aeneas leaves and Dido kills herself after she vows vengeance on Aeneas and Rome. In mythology, it is Dido’s vengeful heart that was the spark that ignited the Punic wars and ultimately lead to the destruction of Carthage. Mee doesn’t take us there. He leaves us instead at a moment of historical possibility. We know what happened according to the ancient tale, but we haven’t seen it played out yet. Could we write a different ending? This is the primary question of Trojan Women 2.0.

**Style, Structure and Tone**

"*The Greeks, Shakespeare and Brecht understood human character within a rich context of history and culture. This is my model. In 1906/1907, Picasso stumbled on cubism as a possible form. Immediately he made three pencil sketches of a man, of a newspaper and a couple other items on the table, and the Sacre Coeur, that is the three classic subjects of art: portraiture, still life and landscape. And he proved to his satisfaction, therefore, that cubism “worked.” My ambition is to do the same for a new form of theatre, composed of music, movement as well as text like the theatre of the Greeks and of American musical comedy and of Shakespeare and Brecht, and of Anne Bogart and Robert Woodruff, and of Robert Le Page and Simon Burney, and of Sasha Waltz ad Jan Lauwers and Alain Platel, and of Pina Bausch and Ivo van Hove, and of others working in Europe today, and of theatre traditions in most of the world forever.*" (Charles Mee from "Mee on Mee" by Erin Mee, pg. 97-98)

"Erin: And your plays are collages... and you’ve said you compose your plays the way Max Ernst composed his Fatgaga pieces... Chuck: Max Ernst is the originator, I guess, of the modern collage. What Ernst did in effect, is what I’m saying I’d like to do; he took scissors and cut texts out of daily newspapers and catalogues of other things, and he rearranged them on the page and glued them down and did a little drawing and painting around them to make them into his view of something. So, in effect, he took the unedited material of the real world and rendered it as hallucination. And that’s what I think I’m
doing all the time. I think Max Ernst is my dramaturg." (Charles Mee from “Mee on Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 87)

“My father’s plays are full of Brechtian reversals – familiar things made strange... My father’s plays are full of excess. In First Love, Edith doesn’t throw one plate in rage, she throws 100... There is always excessive speech... My father’s plays feature arias – moments where the plot stops, allowing a character to thoroughly and deeply explore an idea or feeling before the play moves on.” (Charles Mee from “Mee on Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 86)

“The characters in your plays are liked smashed pots; if you pick up any one shard of pottery, it doesn’t look like it has anything to do with the other shard lying around, but if you were to glue all the pieces back together, they would make a (more or less) coherent pot. And each of those chards is a different motivating force. At another level, each shard is a piece of text that has come from some different source. Character then – who a person is – is an assemblage of bits of history, pop culture, philosophy, etc.” (Charles Mee from “Mee on Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 89)

“Mee says he doesn’t view creating a play as writing a text that someone then places on stage. Rather it’s imagining a three-dimensional event in which text has some part. ‘I like to think of music and movement, dance and acrobatics as the physical landscape that the text comes out of.’” (Philadelphia Inquirer, Pg. H 01, 3/23/03)

**Ideas: Sets, Costumes, Lights, Sound**

“Therefore as a director I can’t simply illustrate what my father has done; I have to meet the text with other elements – I’m not just allowed to bring my ideas to the production, I’ expected to do so.” (Charles Mee from “Mee on Mee” by Erin Mee, pg. 85)

Mee demands collaboration. We need to bring ourselves and our ideas to this piece as a collaborative team. Here are some of Jeanine’s and my introductory notions... The movement of this play is from the destruction of one city to the construction of another. The play requires two distinct settings. Act I is set in “Troy” in ruins and Act II is set in “Carthage” in an upscale Women’s Health club. The settings, like the play should embrace anachronism and should help us connect the issues of this mythological realm to our contemporary world.
Act I is much more fragmented than Act II. In the original production, fragmentation was the structural principal of Act I. Troy is in ruins. Collage and found objects seem right for this Act. Very specific descriptions of the original setting are available in “The Trojan Women a Love Story: A Postmodern Semiotics of the Tragic” by Sarah Bryant-Bertail in Theatre research International Vol. 25, Issue 1, 2000, pgs. 45-52.

Tina Landau directed the original production and the two acts were staged in different sites in the same building. If this is possible for us, we are open to it. If not, we must go into this with the notion that we will radically transform the performance space between Acts. Perhaps the rebuilding process is part of the performance. We watch the ruins of Troy transformed into the opulence of Carthage. The audience is given an intermission, but we perform the transformation.

Act II needs a “Jacuzzi” that is filled with water. Ruins of this can be on stage in Act I, and we have an idea about blood which becomes the Jacuzzi water in Act II flowing into it as the women sing “Scarlet Ribbons”. At any rate, we see “blood” flowing during that song. The health club needs gym stuff. In the original production there were lounge chairs, massage tables and trapezes. All of those sound good. A trampoline would be great too.

In Act I, we want to add a character who is a photographer, a photo journalist, who is documenting the atrocities. This is an echo of the current of efforts by photographers in Darfur who have donated their photos for an exhibit that is traveling around the country. It was originally projected on the outside walls of the Holocaust Museum. We went to the HM website and were struck by the image of the projections on the building which were huge. Go to www.ushmm.org and click on “Our Walls Bear Witness”. We were thinking that we could project fragmented images of Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan – any contemporary hotbed – as the photographer shoots photos in Act I, but they would be very broken images, especially as the men recount the impact that the war in Troy had on them. Other times in Act II, we might see beautiful images of wonderfully civilized society, things that might be on the walls of a women’s health club, a spa.

The costumes for the women’s chorus in Act I have been perplexing. Jeanine and I think we need to collage them as well. They should be contemporary, but we were looking at images of women and children in Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, etc. and we think we can combine the western influences seen everywhere with the various ethnic looks. For example, the women of Darfur tend to dress in beautiful, vibrant colors but sometimes might have a t-shirt under their draped cloth. Hecuba is a queen and could be wearing an
American or European designer dress, but one that perhaps has fabric or color influences of a different culture. Or, maybe it is enough that she has a totally western influence while others don’t. We think some sort of head dressing is in order for all the women, but not as one identifiable cultural choice. Of course, all costumes in Act I will need to be severely distressed, and “filthy”. The Men in Act I should look American. Talthybius is a diplomat in a suit and the other two are Special Forces guys. Menelaus is a general. We see desert fatigues. There is the suggestion that one of the women of the chorus is a man disguised as a woman who is revealed at the end of Act I. We have not made decisions yet about the size of the chorus or double casting.

In Act II the women are in sleek workout outfits. They are very contemporary. In the original production they were white, we believe, to contrast with the filth of Act I. The men will probably be stripped to their underwear and given robes or something other than their battle fatigues. They were formerly combatants at Troy and have escaped with Aeneas. In the original production, Aeneas was in soiled and raged tennis whites. He wore those in both Acts. He is a favorite of the Gods and has been hiding at the start of the play, so we suspect the tennis whites speak to his privileged position, but another choice is fine. Charles Mee plays are very messy, and we need to accommodate for that. Clothes will get wet and actors will be very physical in them.

The lights should evoke two very different environments, and at times in Troy we may have sirens with flashing lights or something along those lines. These may return in Act II as the men experience PTSD. Troy is a dark place, and it gets bleaker as the Act I progresses. Act II is light, warm, clean and inviting. It probably gets pretty sexy too, but it may darken as the Act II comes to a close. Lights can be quite nonrealistic throughout and really work to intensify emotional stakes. Both Acts will need specials and maybe a follow spot as we narrow down on actors for songs and moments of operatic text.

The sound design will be complex. We’ll need lots if effects in Act I of bombs, helicopters, gunfire and the like. These may recur in Act II. Some, if not all of the accompaniment will be recorded. I don’t know what to do with all the songs yet. We need a Music Director. We will need wireless microphones, probably two.

Please do not stifle any creative impulses as you work on your designs. It’s important that you bring your insights and sensibilities to the table. What I’ve written as “ideas” are merely that. Jeanine and I are at the very early stages with this play. Use this document as a starting point to develop a shared vision. It’s a very complicated and exciting piece of theatre.
APPENDIX B: COLUMBUS DISPATCH REVIEW
OSU troupe nails update of ancient tale

Tuesday, November 6, 2007 3:40 AM

BY MICHAEL GROSSBERG

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Helen (Elizabeth Yerian) teases Paul Moon, left, and Nick Trouw

IF YOU GO

The Ohio State University Theater Department will present Trojan Women 2.0 at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Nov. 15-17 in the Drake Center’s Roy Bowen Theatre, 1849 Cannon Dr. Tickets cost $10 to $15. Call 614-292-2295 or visit www.theater.osu.edu

Charles Mee’s playful and probing updates of ancient Greek plays blend passion, intellect, action, surprise, whimsicality, musicality, femininity, masculinity, violence, sex, romance, comedy and tragedy.

One wouldn’t expect a student cast, however gifted, to capture the rainbow of colors, moods, styles and themes in Trojan Women 2.0, Mee’s loose adaptation of a Euripides play and Berlioz opera.
Yet, under the inspired joint direction of Maureen Ryan and Jeanine Thompson, the Ohio State University Theater Department production shatters those expectations while fulfilling others through an artful fusion of text and movement.

In the first act, the 20-member cast brings home the harrowing aftermath of the Trojan War.

Jessica Podewell is eloquent as Hecuba, the protective but powerless leader of the female survivors.

Virginia Logan's noble Andromache and Ashlee Mundy's plaintive Cassandra add buried reserves of feeling.

At Friday's kaleidoscopic romp of a performance, Elizabeth Yerian made the most of her belated entrance as beautiful Helen, updated into a sexy-funny Madonna belting out Avril Lavigne's *Girlfriend* and backed by a chorus of dancing men.

Excerpts from other well-chosen songs (*I Will Follow*, *Hymn to Ganesha*, *Scarlet Ribbons*) add haunting atmosphere to the mournful passage of Sarah Katz's doomed Polyxena.

Except for Bruno Lovric's ardent Aeneas and a few bit-part soldiers, most actors switch gears and roles for the second act.

Inspired by the affair between Dido and Aeneas in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, Mee imagines ancient Carthage as a modern spa where war-weary men find refuge among willing and aerobic women.

Suggested for adult audiences because of violence, profanity, partial nudity and second-act scenes of lovemaking, Mee's version of *The Trojan Women* weaves in 20th-century texts that draw parallels to modern wars.

Kudos to the striking design.

Lindsay Simon's strongly gender-defined costumes and David Toro's evocative sounds bridge ancient and modern eras.

Matthew McCarren's scenery shifts from war-ravaged scaffolding to a watery boudoir.

Anthony Pellecchia's bold lighting moves from the manic to the antic or romantic.
Like *Big Love*, the other Mee update of a Greek classic to be staged in central Ohio in recent years, *Trojan Women 2.0* entertains and challenges audiences with an eclectic theatricality that makes it easier to face Mee's big questions.

Will our passions, perceived obligations and sexual drives lead us to disaster or fulfill our longing for a world of civility?

Will humanity make love or war -- or persist at both?

And why do men play air guitar, anyway?

mgrossberg@dispatch.com
APPENDIX C: TABLES
Trojan Women
Costume Plot

TABLE ONE

ACT I

Principle Women

1. Hecuba: White blouse, black skirt, black petticoat, ballet shoes, necklace, 1 earring.
2. Andromache: Gown, bracelet, nude panties, strapless bra, sandals.
3. Cassandra: gown, nude panties, bra, sandals, rings, gloves, necklace, tights.
4. Helen of Troy: bra and panties, amo belt, robe, fishnet tights, boots, dog tags, ring, Earrings.
5. Polyxena: Corset and jeans (doubles) open wound (latex), fishnet top, bracelet, hair Ribbons, tights.

Principle Men

1. Talthybius: Blue Pinstripe Suit, red and black striped tie, white button up shirt, black wing tip shoes, sunglasses, black belt, dark socks.
3. Aneas: Khakis, checkered blue and white button up shirt, navy cardigan with crest, sandals, watch.

Chorus Women

1. Eisa: jeans, blouse, headwrap, necklace, sandals, cloak, bracelet.
3. Sei: bike shorts, skirt, knit shirt, headwrap, sash, shoes, socks.

Secondary Men

1. Bill: Camo pants, army tan t-shirt, pocketed vest, gloves, belts, holsters, baseball cap, sunglasses, combat boots
2. RayBob: same as Bill
TABLE ONE (CONTINUED)

ACT II

Principle Women

1. Dido: white dress, headband, bikini top and bottom, sandals, rings, earrings.

Principle Men

2. Aneas: same as Act 1, also white bath robe, boxer briefs, dance belt.

Chorus Women

1. Letty: bikini top and bottom, towel, sandals
2. Carol: bikini top and bottom, dress, shoes
3. Andrea: bikini top and bottom, slippers, skirt, blouse
4. Alice: bikini top and bottom, gaucho pants, tank top, slippers.

Sirens

(Michelle Golden): bikini top and bottom, shorts, wrap shirt, sandals.
(Erika Hanes): sports bra, swim bottoms, sweat pants, hoodie, shoes.
(Angela Henderson): bikini top and bottom, short wrap skirt, tank top, sandals.
(Sarah Katz): Swim top and bottom, pants, shoes.
(Meredith Lark): tank top, swim bottoms, pants, shoes.
(Pam Sanchez): swim top and bottom, tube top, skirt, sandals.

Secondary Men

1. Joe (I) camo pants, tan t-shirt, dog tags, combat boots.
   Joe (II) White terry cloth robe, boxer briefs, dance belt.

2. Eddie (I) camo pants, tan t-shirt, dog tags, combat boots.
   Eddie (II) White terry cloth robe, boxer briefs, dance belt.

3. Jim (I) camo pants, tan t-shirt, dog tags, combat boots.
   Jim (II) White terry cloth towel, boxer briefs, dance belt.
TABLE ONE (CONTINUED)


Soldiers

(Max Koknar) I: tan t-shirt, tan camo pants, combat boots, dog tags.
   II: white robe, boxer briefs, dance belt.
(Paul Moon) I: tan t-shirt, tan camo pants, combat boots, dog tags.
   II: towel, boxer briefs, dance belt.
(Zach Sciranka) I: tan t-shirt, tan camo pants, dog tags, combat boots.
   II: towel, boxer briefs, dance belt.
(Nick Trouw) I: tan t-shirt, tan camo pants, combat boots, dog tags.
   II: robe, boxer briefs, dance belt.
BUDGET FOR *TROJAN WOMEN 2.0*

**TABLE TWO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Approximated Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hecuba</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andromache</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassandra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>$108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polyxena</td>
<td>$245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menelaus</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Army Chorus uniforms</td>
<td>$528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talthybius</td>
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<td>5 Act I Chorus Women costumes</td>
<td>$115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aeneas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dido</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Act II women’s whites</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Act II men’s whites</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabana Boy</td>
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Approximated Expenditures: $2,600
Actual Expenditures: $2,963.09
Show Budget: $3,000
APPENDIX D: FIGURES
FIGURE 2: RESEARCH IMAGES

HECUBA RESEARCH IMAGE

ACT II COLOR RESEARCH
FIGURE 3: FATAGAGA RESEARCH IMAGES

82
FIGURE 4: PRELIM SKETCH OF ANDROMACHE #1
FIGURE 6: PRELIM SKETCH OF CASSANDRA

85
FIGURE 7: PRELIM SKETCH OF POLYXENA
FIGURE 8: PRELIM SKETCH OF HECUBA
APPENDIX E: PLATES
PLATE 1: RENDERING FOR HECUBA
PLATE 2: RENDERING FOR ANDROMACHE
PLATE 3: RENDERING FOR CASSANDRA
PLATE 4: RENDERING FOR HELEN
PLATE 5: RENDERING FOR POLYXENA
PLATE 6: RENDERING FOR TALTHYBIUS
PLATE 8: RENDERING FOR ACT 1 CHORUS WOMEN

TROJAN WOMEN
PLATE 9: RENDERING FOR MENELAUS
PLATE 12: RENDERING FOR AENEAS ACT II
PLATE 17: PRODUCTION PHOTOS 1 & 2
PLATE 23: PRODUCTION PHOTOS 13 & 14
PLATE 24: PRODUCTION PHOTOS 15 & 16

112